

DEC 27 1956

# THE CEA CRITIC

Vol. No. XVIII—No. 9—Published at Springfield, Mass. Editorial Office, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Mass. December, 1956

## CEA NATIONAL SESSION

Washington, D. C.

December, 1956

Friday, December 28

3:45 - 5:15 p.m. Program

East Room  
The Mayflower  
Chinese Room  
The Mayflower  
Chinese Room  
The Mayflower

5:15 - 7:00 p.m. Social Hour and Dinner

7:00 - 8:00 p.m. Annual Business Meeting

Saturday, December 29

8:30 - 9:45 a.m. Breakfast and Program for "Regionals"

Ohio Room  
The Statler

Program for the Annual Meeting, Washington, D. C.

December 28, 1956. 3:45 - 5:15 p.m. East Room, Mayflower Hotel

Theme: ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE:

IMPLICATIONS FOR COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHERS

Chairman: Donald J. Lloyd, Wayne State University

Speakers:

Oliver J. Caldwell, Assistant Commissioner for International Education, Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D. C.

Robert D. Kennedy, Chief, English Teaching Branch, Information Center Service, U. S. Information Agency, Washington.

Leo L. Rockwell, Director, Division of Arts and Letters, Colgate University.

Panel:

J. Manuel Espinosa, Chief, Professional Activities Division, International Educational Exchange Service, Department of State, Washington, D. C.

Alva L. Davis, Director, American Language Center, The American University, Washington, D. C.

James P. McCormick, Wayne State University.

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To be addressed to Mrs. Rosemary Messer, CEA, P. O. Box 472, Amherst, Massachusetts.

CEA Headquarters will be set up at the Washington Statler. The Bureau of Appointments will function here. The headquarters, too, will provide a convenient gathering place for CEA members and their friends; also a retreat or refuge for the weary.

## The Need For An Essay Test Of Writing

In a thoughtful article in the October issue of *The CEA Critic*, Edmund L. Volpe of the City College of New York blames the college student's deficiencies in composition on the negligence of college teachers, especially on their past failures in the training of their secondary school colleagues. The argument is persuasive, and it can be strengthened: as college teachers of English, we are doing far less than we might to support present efforts of secondary school teachers to impart competence in writing.

A survey conducted by John W. French of the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey, and including 224 high schools which are members of the National Council of Teachers of English "indicated strongly that teachers of English want an essay test of writing in the College Board program." (*Educational Testing Service Developments* (May, 1956), IV, No. 4, p. 3.) Many of the secondary school teachers who filled out the personally addressed questionnaire felt that the inclusion of such a test in the CEEB program "would help maintain a sufficient amount of writing practice in the curriculum and would motivate students to learn to write."

### No Essay Test

Yet the disturbing fact remains that no test in the College Board battery at the present time examines students' competence in writing by requiring them to produce an essay. Until English teachers in member colleges, acting through their appropriate administrative officers, require a change in this situation, it seems destined to continue; and so long as it continues, college English teachers have small reason to raise their eyebrows because Johnny can't write. Today he does not have to write to gain admission to even the best of our colleges.

The history of this strange omission from the CEEB program can be suggested only briefly. Before World War II, there was such a test; it was dropped partly because of wartime pressures and partly because of the growing tendency of professional testers to distrust any non-objective test. Objective tests can be scored by standards of

"near-perfect accuracy"; but essay tests, quite indigestible in IBM machines, must be scored by fallible human beings.

This objectivizing of testing procedures encouraged wholesale abandonment of essays in the CEEB program, including the abandonment of the essay test of composition. Instead, ingenious devices were found for measuring competence in writing by objective means, means designed primarily to produce "reliable" scores. The testers appear to have been much less concerned with validity. In-  
(Please turn to page 2)

## The Doctor's Dilemma

(Paper read at the Ohio CEA meeting, Columbus, April, 1956.)

I believe that much of the confusion on the campus arises from a basic flaw in American education—its disorientation, its attempt to be all things to all people—in a word, its lack of philosophy. Or rather say, philosophies, for no one wants all colleges and universities to have the same goals. Far from it. Higher education must serve a wide variety of functions in our society: vocational and liberal, professional and technical, religious and secular, practical and theoretical—these and many others.

We have thousands of students to educate, and they vary as much in their abilities as in their interests. No one institution can possibly meet all the diverse needs of all kinds of students. I must say, however, that my (rather disillusioning) study of college catalogues these past three years has led me to conclude that many of our colleges and universities are moving toward this fantastic impossibility. No wonder their faculties are often in a state of mildly exasperated frustration!

### Ground Rules Necessary

Human institutions, like human beings, must know where they stand. A navigator must establish his position before charting his course. And unless some working agreement can be reached on basic educational philosophy, no faculty can make intelligent day-by-day decisions.

By basic educational philosophy  
(Please turn to page 4)

# THE CEA CRITIC

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## ON-GOING CONCERNS OF THE CEA

An ad hoc committee, formed in  
June, 1955, by the CEA directors  
"to consider the long range op-  
portunities and continuing respon-  
sibilities of the CEA," with Bruce  
Dearing (Swarthmore), Kathrine  
Koller (Rochester), Matthew  
Pearce (New Mexico) as members,  
and Carl Lefevre (Chicago Teach-  
ers) as chairman, presented its re-  
port at the July, 1956 CEA Direc-  
tors' meeting. This report was  
based on correspondence and meet-  
ings of the committee, and was  
supported by responses to a ques-  
tionnaire-inquiry that was returned  
by fourteen of the CEA officers,  
directors, and committee members.

The aim of the committee work  
during the year was to establish  
priorities among the suggested on-  
going activities for CEA and to de-  
vise practicable methods of im-  
plementing these concerns. A rat-  
ing scale in the questionnaire of-  
fering five ranks from "urgently  
important" to "of no importance"  
revealed that there were eight ob-  
jectives having prior claim on our  
interest.

Since the report was subdivided  
into heads under various types of  
implementation, these eight topics  
are not all different from each  
other in substance, because the  
same objective may be implement-  
ed in several ways. Thus, under  
the heading "CEA Institutes on  
Old and New Fronts," the topic  
"Helping educate English teachers  
who need humanistic emphasis"  
has top priority, but similar topics  
appear under "New Committees"  
and under "Coverage of committee  
work in The Critic." A sug-  
gested CEA Institute on "Academic  
Standards and Requirements" also  
received a high rating.

Under "New Committees" there  
are four top-priority topics: "Ex-  
pansion of membership"; "Recruit-  
ing able people to college English  
teaching"; "Improvement of teach-  
ing conditions"; and, as mentioned  
above, "Strengthening humanistic  
teaching of English."

Again, under "Coverage of Com-  
mittee work in The Critic, top rat-  
ings were given the topics "Revi-  
talizing the English major"; "Re-  
cruitment of able people to college  
English teaching"; and to  
"Strengthening humanistic teach-  
ing of English."

Eleven other items received av-  
erage but not top ratings. The  
committee recommended that these  
topics be considered after the most  
urgent matters have been attended  
to. Among these items appear such  
matters as "Academic standards

and requirements"; "Meeting the  
teacher shortage"; "Revitalizing  
the English major"; "New goals  
for graduate programs"; and  
"Ph.D. curriculum revision and  
preparation for teaching."

The officers and directors voted  
to adopt the report as a general  
guide.

Progress has already been made  
in the implementing of the recom-  
mendations of this committee, in  
the assigning of top priority tasks  
to already existing committees, and  
in the setting up of new commit-  
tees where necessary. More will be  
heard of these matters at the na-  
tional CEA meeting in Washing-  
ton.

## TELEVISION COMMITTEE

A CEA committee on the use of  
television in education has been ap-  
pointed with Calvin Yost of Ur-  
sinus College as Chairman. It is  
essential to bring to bear the col-  
lective experience of members of  
the CEA if this committee is to  
fulfill its function. Members who  
have had experience, good or ill,  
with the use of television in educa-  
tion are urged to write to Prof.  
Calvin Yost, Dept. of English,  
Ursinus College, Collegeville, Pa.

## ESSAY TEST

(Continued from page 1)

deed, the Educational Testing  
Service now contends that evalua-  
tion of writing is "a service which  
essay tests perform poorly." In  
other words, a composition by the  
student is no longer the most valid  
measure of the student's ability to  
write. Perhaps I am old-fashioned,  
but I find this conclusion surpris-  
ing.

## Composition Test Dropped

Despite this scepticism of the  
professional testers, the College  
Board experimented courageously  
between 1950 and 1956 with a new  
type of composition test which, its  
proponents believed, offered much  
promise. After pilot experiments in  
1951 and 1952, the General Compo-  
sition Test was admitted to the  
May series of College Board tests  
for a two-year trial period. This  
period was extended by one year  
to 1956, at which time the Test  
was discontinued by action of the  
Board.

The General Composition Test  
was a two-hour examination which  
required the student to write a free  
essay on a specified topic of gen-  
eral interest after reading a brief  
discussion designed to stimulate his  
thinking and to provide a start for  
poorer students. The essays were  
scored on four levels in each of  
five qualities (mechanics, style, or-

ganization, reasoning, and content)  
by two readers reading independ-  
ently. While various kinds of con-  
trols were employed, no effort was  
ever made to impose standards on  
readers; rather, they were encour-  
aged to evolve through discussion  
their own standards for each read-  
ing conference.

In the final Conference, held at  
Princeton in June, 1956, the in-  
numerable pairs of readers were in  
agreement in approximately 85%  
of their judgments. Disagreements  
were resolved by further indepen-  
dent readings. Since each reader  
read against every other reader,  
this ratio of agreement seemed to  
the readers and to those associated  
with them to indicate a remarkable  
performance. Nevertheless, it fell  
short of the near-perfect agree-  
ment attainable in objective tests;  
and, at least temporarily, sec-  
ondary school and college teachers  
of composition have lost an opportu-  
nity to require that candidates for  
admission to college demonstrate  
their competence in writing.

## Effective Test

The results of the General Com-  
position Test should be more wide-  
ly known and more carefully  
studied by teachers of writing; for,  
to date, this Test is the most suc-  
cessful direct attack on the ad-  
mittedly difficult problem of eval-  
uating composition by essay test-  
ing. The General Composition Test  
could, surely, be further improved,  
but, even in its present stage of  
development, it has demonstrated  
that it is practicable to construe  
and administer an essay test.

Granted, its "reliability" would  
always be somewhat less than that  
achievable with objective tests; for  
every teacher of English knows  
that no two readers can always be  
in complete agreement and that  
student performance varies some-  
what from essay to essay. But  
these disadvantages, which are in-  
herent in any kind of essay testing,  
would be more than offset by the  
increased validity.

A test of composition should, by  
definition, involve writing, just as  
a test of any other skill should in-  
volve performance; but if college  
teachers of writing, like their sec-  
ondary school colleagues, want an  
essay test of composition in the  
CEEB program, they must say so.  
Such a test would not, by itself,  
solve the problem of composition  
for college teachers; but it would  
dramatize, for secondary school  
students and teachers, the great  
and increasing concern of college  
teachers about the quality of un-  
dergraduate writing.

James F. Beard, Jr.  
Clark University



## Notes On The English Language

As research on language advances, it brings accretions of information which give rise to new theoretical formulations; these in turn make possible large new additions of knowledge. The nature of language itself does not change; all that happens is that we know more about it. Where our teaching touches on language, it must be kept in close scholarly touch with what is known in order to remain live and sound. Each new generation of literary scholars must be educated in the best current views of language. The following note on language in the graduate preparation of English teachers by Professor A. A. Hill of the University of Texas, Secretary of the Linguistic Society of America and a member of the CEA Committee on Language, is a statement of this distinguished scholar's mature judgment on the form this education should take:

### Historical Linguistics

During the early days of the Ph.D. discipline in this country linguistics was thought of primarily as an historical discipline. Consequently, those responsible for the programs at the principal graduate schools of the country were likewise responsible for the general inclusion of courses in historical states of the language in the discipline.

The aim was excellent, but since in point of fact the connection between historical linguistics and study of literature is either ancillary or tenuous at best, Ph.D.'s in English were seldom convinced that linguistics was a discipline closely related to the subjects they would spend their lives teaching and studying.

As a result, the historical courses came more and more to be mere preparation for translation of older literature, so that by the end of the Kittredge period there was

a violent reaction in the direction of throwing out all linguistic work in favor of concentrating more time on literary criticism.

### A Social Science

Modern linguistics is however no longer primarily a historical discipline but is instead one of the most rigorous of the behavioral and social sciences. It takes as its field the whole area of human communication and symbolic activity, and, though still far from completely adult, has for nearly half a generation passed the stage at which it was necessary to speak merely of its promise.

The results of the science are already sufficient so that there have emerged linguistically oriented theories of literary analysis; similarly the results in classroom teaching of foreign languages have been sufficient so that it is clear that they can also be applied to the specialized situation of teaching written communication to native speakers.

For all of the above reasons the need in the graduate preparation of teachers of English is no longer a course in Gothic and Old English but a full year's work in structural linguistics directed towards understanding of the current native language in its several dialects and levels, spoken and written.

Archibald A. Hill  
University of Texas

## ENGLISH COMPOSITION AT THE JOHNS HOPKINS

(The following paper was read as part of a panel on Freshman Writing at the Middle Atlantic CEA meeting at Annapolis last spring).

There are three factors inherent in the nature of the Johns Hopkins University which affect to a greater or lesser degree the way in which the basic writing course is set up and conducted at the Hopkins. First of all, the course is taught entirely by graduate student "junior instructors," each of whom teaches one section. About one-third to one-half of these junior instructors have had little or no previous teaching experience.

### Exemption Is Possible

Secondly, the course is not automatically required for graduation. The department in which the student is majoring requires, however, that he demonstrate his ability to write correct, clear, effective English. This writing requirement may be met by examination. Twice a year a comprehensive writing examination is given, consisting of the Educational Testing Service's "English SB Higher Test" (in three parts) and a 500-word theme.

Students who make a very high mark on each part of the test and on the theme are absolved from the writing course. About 20 to 25 students pass this examination each year. Most undergraduate students, however, take the basic writing course, though not always in the freshman year.

Each year about 50 to 75 of the total of 300 to 325 enrolled in the course are upper classmen. Usually about 12 to 14 sections are set up, with about 20 to 25 students in a section.

Thirdly, the writing of papers is greatly emphasized in almost all courses at the Hopkins, and students in the upper classes especially are expected to be able, without further instruction, to conduct an investigation and write a well-organized, logical paper.

### Service Course

The course in English composition is regarded principally as a service or tool course at the Hopkins. The purpose of the course is to help the student to learn to write vigorous, lucid, expository prose. Three fundamentals are emphasized throughout the course: 1) coherent, logical organization, 2) clear, precise sentences, 3) accurate generalization of facts and details and the effective supporting of generalizations with concrete, specific, pertinent detail.

Reading is confined to prose es-

says; no poetry or fiction is read in the course, except incidentally. Students may take a course in literature concurrently with the writing course, if they wish; about 50 or 60 do so.

### Writing — Centered

The texts used in the writing course are Gorrell and Laird's *Modern English Handbook* (Prentice-Hall, Inc.) and Connolly's *A Rhetoric Case Book* (Harcourt, Brace and Company); regular weekly assignments are made in these texts.

But the course is centered upon the student's own writing. About 10 to 12 themes of 400 words each and an investigative paper of about 2,500 words are required each term. To the investigative paper the better part of six weeks is devoted.

In the first term, attention is concentrated upon learning the use of the library and of the standard reference works and upon mastering the organization of materials and the mechanics of footnotes, bibliographies, etc. In the second term, the emphasis is shifted to the evaluation of source materials and the proper use of primary and secondary sources.

A theme is written weekly (some impromptu, in class) except during the period when the student is most intensively engaged with his investigative paper. For the first five or six weeks the theme con-

(Please turn to page 4)

## EXPLORATIONS: READING, THINKING, DISCUSSION AND WRITING

By THOMAS CLARK POLLOCK, *New York University*; JAMES L. WORTHAM, *University of Kansas*; FREDERIC REEVE, *Michigan State University* and STEPHEN BLOORE, *Fairleigh Dickinson College*.

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## ENGLISH COMP.

(Continued from page 3)  
sists of comparatively simple exposition. The student is asked to choose a subject from his own experience, to select pertinent facts and details, and to organize them into a meaningful whole by means of accurate generalization.

Although the mechanics of grammar and punctuation are not taught formally, these matters are taken up as student themes are read and discussed in class, especially during these first five or six weeks. We then begin to take up the various rhetorical forms—definition, classification and division, exemplification, cause and effect, etc. The last few themes during the second term consist of analyses of opposing sides of an argument.

## Class Routine

Themes are regularly read and criticized in class by the instructor, and the class is invited to comment, to ask questions, and to propose better constructions than those which have been used in the particular theme being discussed.

Then the student is required to correct errors of mechanics, to rewrite incorrect, inaccurate, or clumsy sentences, and to reorganize faulty theme structure. Corrected themes must be turned in periodically, and the revisions are graded.

During the fourth or fifth week

of the first term, after the instructor has seen enough of each student's work to know what his writing difficulties are, individual theme conferences are scheduled, at which the instructor goes over each theme with the student, pointing out faults and obscurities and explaining corrections more fully. These conferences continue throughout the year, each student going over his themes with his instructor for 15 or 20 minutes every three or four weeks.

## Marked Improvement

This system has proved fairly successful at the Hopkins. It is designed to minimize the effect of the relative inexperience of the graduate student instructor and to make the fullest use of his youthful enthusiasm for teaching and of his rapport with the undergraduate student who is not very much younger than he.

The graduate student instructor is not likely to excel in lecturing or in the formal presentation of theory; but we have found him generally capable and surprisingly patient in helping our students to solve their practical writing problems. There are unsolved problems, to be sure, but on the whole we have found that most of our students have markedly improved their proficiency in writing by the middle of the second term and have begun to acquire some conception, at least, of the potentialities of idiomatic English.

Paul Phipps

The Johns Hopkins University

## Pygmalion and My Fair Lady

On October 17 the Chicago Shaw Society issued to the press a report stating that many protests have come to it concerning the inability of college and amateur theatrical groups to get permission to produce *Pygmalion*. This, the group feels, constitutes a violation of Shaw's Last Will and Testament.

William D. Chase of Flint, Michigan, secretary of the Shaw Society, said that the situation makes Shaw the victim of a new type of censorship. "Presumably to protect the commercial success of a musical comedy (*My Fair Lady*) which Shaw did not write, his original play (*Pygmalion*) upon which the musical is based, has been withdrawn from the amateur market" he said.

Shaw expressly stated in his will that "My trustee shall not in dealing with any such rights be bound by commercial considerations exclusively."

## DOCTOR'S DILEMMA

(Continued from page 1)

I mean something more than rhetoric. I mean the concrete conditions, the ground rules, under which a given institution proposes to operate: what students it will educate, by what means, and to what ends. Committing itself thus to a specific kind of educational activity, the college is in a position to develop a coherent curriculum and may expect all departments, including the English department, to conform to the agreed-upon pattern.

Such singleness of purpose, however, is rare indeed. Some liberal arts colleges and some technical schools have preserved their character and meaning, but others have become agglomerations without discernible logic or unity. How can the doctor avoid his dilemma when the institution is at cross purposes with itself? Surely a first step toward sanity in higher education would be to discover its basic orientation.

## Uniqueness Is Hard

But even when an educational philosophy is agreed upon in any college, the drift away from it sets in almost at once. Institutions, like men, tend to find uniqueness uncomfortable, and the easy ways of conformity are always at hand and inviting.

The official voice of the college—that of the President or Dean—may on occasion be a vigorous one in proclaiming the distinctive function of the institution. But the implementation of this philosophy must almost always be left to a staff of admissions officers, assistant deans, educational advisers, vocational counsellors, registrars, secretaries, and punchers of cards for the I.B.M. machines.

Anything really distinctive about an institution's purpose has small chance of surviving these educational processors, and there is really no wonder that the student finally reaches the professor's class with the wrong expectations and the wrong motives. He is lucky, indeed, if he has come to the right class.

There may be some exaggeration in this account of our educational bureaucracy, but not so much as I could wish. The problem may be less acute in the smaller institutions, but elsewhere administrative machinery is becoming an obstacle to be reckoned with. Communication between the various campus offices is not always good, and sometimes it seems to break down altogether.

No one any longer is surprised

to find the students confused. We provide for that contingency by having a staff psychiatrist in the Health Center, but his services are not available to the faculty. Surely it would be a second step toward sanity in higher education to bring some kind of order to the system.

## Professors Old-fashioned

I wish I could say that all campus confusions are the result of faulty administration. Alas, I can not do so. The fault, dear Doctor, lies not with the Deans—or not with them exclusively. The professor, too, has his blind spots. Typical of these is the conservative and, I think, quite irrational attitude which the English professor takes toward anything which smacks of vocationalism. It is just here that the professor most frequently finds himself at cross purposes with his students, and he is often eloquent on the subject at the Faculty Club.

For the English professor, having read Newman, is sincerely and rightly devoted to the cause of liberal education. His only trouble is that he has not re-examined his theories on the subject lately. He yearns nostalgically for a college where knowledge is pursued as its own end—a college which usually turns out to resemble Old Siwash, the professor's alma mater.

## No Gentlemen Left

Now we have all been moved by Newman's eloquent defense of what he calls liberal knowledge, but it may have escaped our no-

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tice that he also frankly calls it "a gentleman's knowledge." And we may not have recognized the fact that in our application of Newman's great theme to our own classrooms there is a certain residue of sheer snobbery.

We no longer live in the nineteenth century, and our society has changed drastically since Newman wrote his lectures, now over a century ago. University education can no longer address itself to gentlemen of the leisure class. Our students regret this even more than we do, but they know they are going to have to work for a living. That is why they seem, in Prof. Coffin's phrase, "job minded."

For that matter, if training for specific vocations is entirely inconsistent with the aims of liberal education, the professor's own background is not above suspicion. He probably majored in English in college; then wrote a doctoral dissertation on Tennyson's family life, and now earns his living teaching nineteenth century English literature (with emphasis on Tennyson's family life). I seem to sense a slight taint of vocationalism in the professor's history.

#### We Too Are Vocational

As a matter of cold fact, we English professors are really as intent upon giving sound technical training as anyone else. We will not admit it, of course; we may not even recognize it. But we begin teaching the methodology of research in Freshman English when we spend several weeks on

the library papers. Some of us even explicitly call it a "research" paper.

And do we always teach literature in its broad, critical, humanistic sense? Or do we not often tend to insist, even pedantically, on the biographical, bibliographical, and textual minutiae of scholarship? In a word, are we not preparing students as painstakingly as we can for careers in literary research? I am not condemning the scholarly career; I am not even saying that the scholarly approach is necessarily a bad way to teach literature. But I am suggesting very strongly that there is more specific vocationalism in undergraduate English instruction than we professors of the subject ordinarily acknowledge.

#### Many Careers

Why should the doctors take such an illiberal view of liberal education? Why not frankly say that the study of literature, while providing liberal enrichment of the mind, offers also some very practical help in earning a living?

For the scholarly career is not the only one which a student of English may properly undertake. Obviously, that career has appealed to us, but—strange as it may seem—not all of our students aspire to careers just like ours! Nor do they need to. A thorough grounding in literature and composition qualifies one for many careers quite outside the teaching profession, careers in journalism, in editing, in advertising, in the ministry, in law, in government service (both domestic and foreign), in all manner of business and industrial enterprises (especially in positions demanding imagination and human understanding)—the list would be endless.

To be sure, we must not make dishonest claims for our subject; training in English does not guarantee immediate access to these various occupations. Neither, for that matter, does the most narrowly vocational curriculum in the schools of business administration. But we have ample evidence all about us of the practical usefulness of our subject. If "practical usefulness" is inconsistent with our concept of liberal education, then it is high time we reconsidered our concept.

A year or two ago most of us received from the Macmillan Company a pamphlet entitled *Careers for English Majors*, by Professor Ruth Middlebrook of New York University. Members of the College English Association received a similar pamphlet called *English*

and Your Career. These and similar statements published elsewhere set forth clearly and explicitly and honestly the facts about careers open to young men and women who have studied English. I wish a copy might be placed in the hands of every student who is at all interested in our subject, especially if he is worried about his chances of making a living.

#### Review Our Position

But it is not only the students who should study these pamphlets. Professors, too, should read them and should consider their bearing upon the undergraduate program in English. No one is suggesting that we should begin offering courses on *How to Write Collection Letters* or *How to Ghost Write Speeches for Senators*. Quite the contrary. If any change in our teaching is indicated, it would be toward a more broadly humanistic emphasis and away from our present limited emphasis on teaching and research.

The problem is to produce men and women who have a start toward competence for some vocation and who are aware of the great intellectual and cultural tradition. Thus equipped they may be ready for civilized, hard-working, responsible participation in the satisfactions and obligations of modern life.

This is all to say that the doctor's dilemma, so far as vocationalism is concerned, may be largely of his own making. He, too, might take a step or two toward sanity in higher education if he would review his own educational philosophy, especially in its bearing upon the idea of liberal education. He might review, too, his ideas about the relationship between English studies and life in this competitive world.

As a matter of fact, this kind of re-evaluation is already going on in most English departments. I know a great many English professors, and they are not the otherworldly, impractical people of the Hollywood stereotype. They may be harassed and bedeviled by the confusions of the campus, but by and large they lead as orderly lives as business men, say, or as bankers. Most of them have some difficulty making their salary stretch and often have to sacrifice certain necessities for the sake of indispensable luxuries—books, travel, theater, music. But if they feel at cross purposes with their world at all, their malaise is only that which the cultivated mind should feel in this mid-twentieth century. Believing as they do in the profound

relevance of literature to the human condition, they naturally protest those things in American education which seem to limit or counteract the impact of literature on the minds of students. Their criticism of American education is a sign of the strength, not the weakness, of English studies.

I conclude by making explicit the questions which have been in my mind as I have reviewed the English professor's various tensions:

1. How much of this campus confusion is due to vagueness about institutional goals?
2. Has the institution's admissions office and publicity office brought students to the campus expecting a kind of education which we are not in fact prepared to give them?
3. Do junior deans and counselors sometimes get out of step with top administration and faculty? Do they give what Professor Coffin calls "imaginative guidance"? Or are they not often prone to give educational advice on grounds which are too narrowly vocational?
4. Can we not revise our definition of liberal education, or can we not at least rephrase it, using fewer loaded terms and adapting the old ideal to the new world? Is not part of the dilemma semantic?
5. Can the English department answer the vocationalism of students and counselors with a higher vocationalism of its own?

Harlan W. Hamilton

Western Reserve University



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## CULTURAL NATIONALISM

It was never a service to America to say, "In music let us have less of Beethoven, Bach, Mozart, Wagner, Schubert, and Brahms, for we are Americans, we have fought two wars against the Germans and Austrians, and we licked them." Such thinking is so chauvinistic and so irrelevant that I doubt if any periodical in the field of music would print it, even if a professor of music should write it.

The state of musical culture in the United States today is relatively healthy. The same cannot be said for literary culture. The CEA Critic for October, 1956, carries the following plea, by C. B. Williams: "American society does not want so much English literature in college curriculums as we have been trying to keep there. Why should it? Surely by now we are no longer a colonial nation. The United States of America contains about 60 per cent of the English-speaking world, four times the population of England."

If these statistics could have any use, it might be to prove that we should supply four times as many readers of great literature as England. This particular argument would hardly be worth calling attention to, if there were not quite a number of American-literature professors who frequently act on these principles, even if they would hesitate to formulate them so clearly. This kind of patriotism is to be

distinguished from the true patriotism which would keep our musical and literary culture as high as possible, and our comprehension of human life as wide and generous as possible. The kind of patriotism which sets out to make profit from national pride is dangerous in politics; it is more dangerous in liberal education.

### No Substitute for the Best

How rich is our civilization in America? Must we thin it down to mean, for example, music only when composed (and played) by properly screened citizens born on this side of the Atlantic since 1900? Is it enough to say smugly? "I yield to few in my admiration for and enjoyment of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton . . ." right after saying of the values to be found in English literature, "I think we can find them also in our native literature"? The literary values of Chaucer are not found in "our native literature," or for that matter anywhere else outside Chaucer. Only Milton is Miltonic. There is no substitute, in American drama, for Shakespeare. For the best, in any art, there is never any substitute.

In spite of our cultural nationalists, a liberal education must make quality, not political allegiance, the test of what to teach—in music, or in literature, or in philosophy. We should show our students the high delights to be derived from Dickens and Mark Twain, because both are great, not because one is an American and the other a Briton. In English departments today, "English" includes foreign literatures translated into English. I am not aware of any cells of allegiance to the British Commonwealth, on our campuses, to rival the Americanists who would elevate American nationalism into a literary criterion.

### We Speak English

Some students, and, sad to say some professors, still have to be told that we read "English" literature not because it was produced in Great Britain but because it is in our own language. The linguistic reference of the word is what counts. "American" literature is a subdivision of "English," not a parallel and alternative body of linguistic art. Incredible nonsense about an "American language" is set forth by some arch-nationalists; it can be shattered by noticing that the language of Moby Dick and The House of Seven Gables sounds as strange to us as that of

Boswell or Swift. Indeed, it sounds even stranger. The literature written by Pope, Wordsworth, Trollope, is not to us a foreign literature. We are reading the richest literature we can master. We need to broaden our human sympathy, not to narrow it.

I have taught American masterpieces with profound admiration. I am not saying that we should ignore the great literature written in America, or deny that gradually our writers have forged ahead of the British in contemporary leadership. I am saying that in all fields of culture, we are great insofar as we achieve excellence. We have been less hampered by cultural nationalism than most of the nations of the world. Surely this is splendid. Every professor who is enthusiastic about America, and what we can mean to the world, should be especially enthusiastic about precisely this cultural internationalism.

### Make Excellence Popular

It is no excuse to say that literature defined nationalistically might be more popular with the hungry sheep who look up and are not yet fed. Certain politicians also have aimed at the kind of popularity which might argue that "American society does not want so much" of world thinking, and "Why should it? Surely by now we are . . . four times the population of England," etc.

But college and university faculties need not climb down to that level. And even in politics, our greatest presidents have meant something to the aspirations of all mankind. To get support, they often had a tremendous popularizing job to do. So do we. The quality of our culture is at stake. We have lost some battles. Like political workers devoted to a great cause, we must work tirelessly to open the eyes and minds of our public to the difference between excellence and mediocrity. We must never stop thinking up devices for popularizing the best. Such ingenuity was not beneath the dignity of Lincoln, or of Wilson. A party or a department is not worth saving if it turns away from this hard task and tries to save itself by encouraging the narrow prejudices and nationalistic vanity of an unenlightened public.

Joseph E. Baker  
University of Iowa

## King Lear From Yellow Springs

Cordelia won. What matters that her world  
Fell all about her: she was right and true.  
Though earth and sky were to oblivion hurled,  
What more than right can any mortal do?

She would not compromise her simple candor  
Or stoop to match her wits with greed and guile;  
To childishness she would not deign to pander  
Or yield to folly an indulging smile.

Her dauntless spirit, lost among the stars,  
Commanded Kent's and all men's adoration;  
"Richer than words," her "love" wrought strife and wars  
And crowned an old man's final desolation.

But who of us, alone, can find his way  
Through night and chaos to the light of day?

Deckard Ritter  
Illinois College

The D. H. Lawrence Fellowship Fund of the Univ. of New Mexico is soliciting contributions to encourage creative writers and artists by providing summer residence at the Lawrence Ranch near Tacos, New Mexico. The fellowship will be awarded annually. Harry T. Moore is on the sponsoring committee.

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## KAN U READ THE NU SPELLING?

Benjamin Franklin toyed in vain with the idea of reforming it and heavens knows it needs reform. Noah Webster tried to clean up some of the worst spots but except for a few isolated successes failed. The redoubtable Theodore Roosevelt had a hassle with Congress over it but had to acknowledge defeat. The it, of course, is our curious, wayward, ailing, perverse, cantankerous system of spelling.

Though you and I may tremblingly consult the dictionary in order not to offend, though a philosopher, a lexicographer, and a president of the United States may have tossed in the sponge, the American advertiser remains uncowed by our monstrous spelling. In an effort to sell his product he does not hesitate to lay violent hands on our orthography, and in many instances it must be granted that he has remolded it nearer the heart's desire.

Philologists, for example, point out that c is an unnecessary letter in our alphabet, one whose functions could be taken over pretty well by s or k. Without consulting the philologists, advertisers have sent a good many c's into banishment: All-Kote (a one coat paint); Bakon Krisp (fried bacon rinds); Kro-Flite Golf Balls; Kantleek Ear Syringe; Kwik Chek Food Store; Kwik-Kafe (a coffee dispenser); Sta-Kleen Cleaners; Deluxe Kleen-cut Shears; False Teeth Klutch; and Katy Kackler, Kannon Ball

Express, and Kavalcade of Letters (toys).

Porter Perrin, an authority on American English usage, admits that a "handful of words containing - ough and augh are one of the minor scandals of English spelling." Well, advertisers haven't been afraid of tangling with through, enough, and others in that unregenerate gang. One reads of stores open "Xmas Nite thru Jan. 10," of "All Sizes from Infants thru Youth's Size," of movies "Today! Showing thru Saturday!" Indeed the shorter, more convenient thru has almost completely displaced through on billboards. Enough was reformed in the spelling of Doctor Enuf, a patent medicine of a few years ago, and tough has had the full treatment in Tuff Tex Tile, Tuf-flex Temp-ered Paste, and Tripl-Tuff Floor Finishes.

Experts in language history point out that the gh's in words like knight and light were pronounced in Chaucer's time though they have long since become silent in standard English. Advertisers haven't hesitated to cast off the burden of the fourteenth century and have resented such words to their heart's content: Break the Bank Tonight 8:30; Warner Hardware Open Nites; twilite matinees; Twi Lite (multi-colored flames for the fireplace); Lite-All Taper Lighter; Auto-Lite Spark Plugs; Sanilite. They have shot the works at right in Thermo - Rite; Froz-Rite Ice Cream; Taste Rite Packing Company; and Pops - Rite. Changes have been made in a variety of words like Fast-Flite (a baseball); Sealtite Storm Windows; and Diary Delite. High has been widely respelled as it is now pronounced. Examples abound: Hi-way Market; Hi-way Cafe; Ocean Hiway South; Hi Ball Caddy Set; and Hi-Power Rotary Motor.

Advertisers have also cut a wide swath through superfluous y's, e's, and w's. The w's are snipped in Nunn-Busch Lo-Cuts; Yello-Bole Carburetor; Flatter Glo Foundation; Glo-Coat; Sno-Flyr (a snow plow); and Rapid Flo Filter Disks. In the following list e's have been dropped: Safway Rentals; Minit Car Wash; Secur-Seal; Tru-Sonic Model Hearing Aid; and Curb-serv and Super Valu stores. The y's have departed in the Sta-Nu Finishing Process and in Sta-Flat, which attempts to control bulging feminine midsections.

A common practice among advertisers is to have a letter of the

alphabet represent the sound that one makes when he names the letter. Hence one gets Press-While-U-Wait and U-Haul Rental Trailers; Ken-L-Biskit; Trav-L-Suds; Trip-L-Crop; Met-L-Cote; La-Z-Boy; Kitch-N-Craft; Val-U Plus Sox; Lady B Lovely Beauty Salon; Doll-E-Layette; E-Z Eye Safety Glass; E-Z Curb-Service; and E-Z Credit. Besides attracting attention, this practice occasionally serves a useful purpose by reducing the number of letters necessary to convey a message on a poster or sign where space is at a premium.

If many of the spellings of advertisers show a decided improvement on our current mildewed orthography, others represent a deliberate reversion to the even unhappier conditions prevailing several centuries ago. In order to give the effect of exoticness and antiquity, old forms are sometimes revived (often inaccurately); extra letters are added; and French spellings are retained long after they should have been decently Anglicized.

Liquor firms, for example, do not want to give the idea that their products were in the corn fields six months ago so conservative spellings are preserved. The whiskey may be kept in a candlelight decanter, but it is never stored in a candlelite decanter. One Scotch is advertised in an American magazine as "distinguished by a great softness and delicacy of flavour." With that extra British u it must be genuine stuff! Another liquor advertisement has dredged up Dr. Johnson's eighteenth century Saxon k and begins its pitch with a "Public Notice."

Old time spellings, however, are not limited to alcohol ads. In Christmas candies a customer may buy Old Tyme Mix. Again one may eat at a grille or even have a grille on his car. But since the female sex, perhaps more than the male, dearly loves to snoot, one isn't surprised to find a multitude of snobbish spellings in the cosmetic field. Women who have anything to do with beauty products seem to be called Helene. The products are likely to be named Moderne or Angelique. If a woman is in need of repairs, she will always have the choice of Lady Faire Beauty Salon or Claire's Beauty Shoppe. No one is ever so crude as to apply a cream. It is invariably a creme.

To what degree have the spellings employed by the advertisers been adopted by the general public? The answer is that they haven't been, to any great extent,

## DER JAMMERWOCH

Es brillig war. Die schlichte Toven Wirrtun und wimmelten in Waben!

Und aller-mumsige Burggoven Die mohmen Raeth' ausgraben.

Bewahre doch vor Jammerwoch! Die Zehne knirschen, Krallen kratzen!

Bewahr' vor Jubjub-Vogel, vor Frumiosen Banderschnatschen!

Er griff sein vorpals Schwertchen zu,

Er suchte lang das manchsam' Ding;

Dann, stehend unten Tumtum Baum,

Er an-zu-denken fing.

Als stand er tief in Andacht auf, Das Jammerwochens Augenfeuer Durch tulgen Wald mit wiffek kam Ein burbelnd Ungeheuer!

Eins, zwei! Eins, zwei! Und durch und durch

Sein vorpals Schwert zerschnitter-schnuck,

Da bleib es todt! Er, Kopf in Hand, Gelaemfig zog zuruck.

Und schlugst Du ja den Jammerwoch?

Umarme mich, mein bohmsches Kind!

O Freuden-Tag! O Halloo-Schlag! Er chortelt froh-gesinut.

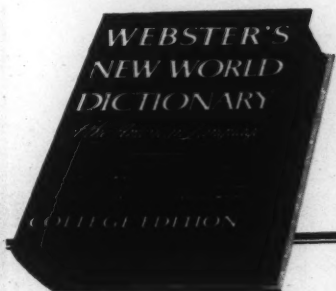
Es brillig war. Die schlichte Toven Wirrtun und wimmelten in Waben;

Und aller-mumsig Burggoven Die mohmen Raeth' ausgraben.

Hermann von Schwindel

though some transfer is inevitable. Most public school officers, for example, can recall vetoing the fancy spellings Helene or Betti on high-school diplomas to the great sorrow of adolescent girls who had recently been tinkering with the spelling of their baptismal names. In student themes the spellings donut and sex now seem to be about as common as the dictionary forms. Of the worth - while spellings, a few like thru, for which Theodore Roosevelt did battle a couple of generations ago, may eventually blast their way into Standard English. At least thru-ways and thru-liners seem to have entirely replaced through-ways and through-liners. With the help of the kids and the advertisers there is still some hope that we may yet untwist a few of the worst kinks of our crooked orthography.

Robert L. Coard  
State Teachers, Minet, N.D.



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## REGIONAL REPORTS

### SOUTH CENTRAL CEA

The annual fall SCCEA breakfast was held at Tulane University on November 3. Elected for 1956-57 were: president, Miss Frances Fletcher (Louisiana Polytechnic); secretary, Miss Irna Herron (Southern Methodist); interstate liaison officer, William B. Leake, (Oklahoma A. and M.) An executive committee was established, to consist of the four immediate past presidents and the three officers elected each year. The four immediate past presidents who will serve on this committee are Ernest E. Leisy (Southern Methodist), Karl Snyder (TCU), Rudolph Fiehler (Louisiana Polytechnic), and Pat Hogan (Miss. State College). Fifty people attended the meeting. It was decided to hold the next meeting on the Friday of the SCMLA meeting and to have a two-hour luncheon and program. This meeting will be held at Southern Methodist University.

William B. Leake  
Oklahoma A. and M. College

### CALIFORNIA CEA

On Oct. 27 the California CEA held its fall meeting in the humanities building at UCLA. The theme of the meeting was "Modern Scientific Linguistics and Its Applications to the Teaching of English," and the program included a report on the Auding Seminar by Byron Guyer (See Sept. CEA Critic), an address by Harry Hoiizer entitled "What the Scientific Linguists Are Trying to Do," and a panel discussion on "Applications of Modern Linguistics to the Teaching of English." Robert P. Stockwell, Donald A. Bird, and James H. Sledd took part in the panel.

### Virginia - North Carolina - West Virginia

New officers elected at the Oct. 20 meeting at East Carolina College are as follows: president, R. C. Simonini, Jr., Longwood College; vice-president, Marvin B. Perry, Jr., Washington and Lee University; secretary-treasurer, Mary P. Nichold, Longwood College.

## NEW ENGLAND CEA FALL MEETING

The panel on "Problems of the College Theater" comprised Professor Harry T. Moore (Babson) as Chairman and Professors Robert Chapman (Harvard) and Paul R. Barstow (Wellesley).

Mr. Chapman, in a comparative analysis of English and French training methods for the theatre, pointed up some striking contrasts. All education for the theatre in England, he stated, with the exception of the University of Bristol, is professional in character, and has little connection with university life. This results in a great deal of narrow concentration in theatre professional training and a proportionate loss in broad educational background.

The professional schools operate in a void taking no responsibility for their students after completion of their two-year training program which indicates a certain irresponsibility toward the profession. This, coupled with an almost exclusive emphasis upon repertory acting, militates against sound professional training.

In France, by contrast, education for the theatre is subsidized and hence talent becomes the sole criterion of admission. Since the Conservatoire, the Centre d'Apprentissage, as well as the Ecole Supérieure, all have attached profession-

al theatres, the opportunities for graduates are excellent. About one hundred professional actors are graduated each year after a three-year program. All teachers are active actors and use the classic drama as the core of their instruction. Hence, the French student is offered a broad well-grounded preparation for his career.

Mr. Barstow, speaking on problems of the college theatre, defended the view that acting experience at college should not become the narrow preoccupation of a small group but should be integrated more fully into the college curriculum and enjoy faculty and administration support. The college should assume financial responsibility for the college theatre in order to eliminate the all too familiar picture of the theatre as the campus mendicant.

Substantively, Mr. Barstow emphasized the eclectic nature of the college theatre today. This, he continued, makes it into a form of laboratory where realism, non-realism, and anti-realism all happily coexist. The college theatre is free from the implacable standard of the commercial theatre, success at the box-office, and hence, experimentation and improvisation may be attempted with impunity. This adventurous spirit of the col-

lege theatre—the courage to fail gallantly rather than to succeed worthlessly—Mr. Barstow defined as the most important single element in good college theatre experience.

John G. Stoessinger  
Babson Institute

### Teaching Poetry

Mr. Brinnin discussed the teaching of poetry as he practiced it on classes that had strong resistance against poetry—such as Freshman classes. He defined poetry as "rhythmical language stimulating to the imagination." His critical standards of approach concerned style, structure and significance. By style he meant rhythm, which is as much a part of tennis or dancing as poetry; meter, cadence, alliteration, and refrain. These are points even engineers can master and comprehend.

These qualities, he pointed out, could be found even in drug-store ballads and song sheets, which are capable of arousing response in the bobby soxer. Even metaphor and simile are present in these ballads. As to structure, Mr. Brinnin explained it as comparable to architecture, or bridge-building, to be thought of in terms of a monodrama in which one follows the moods and fortunes of the hero. By paraphrasing the poem into prose one could show just what ingredients poetry contained that were untransferable.

Under significance, Mr. Brinnin discussed purpose, scope, depth, theme, and meaning. He explained that most poetry presented a conflict that had to be resolved. Finally, he said, he felt the personal value of the poem to the individual should be considered, which brings in the matter of taste.

Mr. Hecht approached the problem of teaching poetry by example: He considered the lyric at the end of *Love's Labour's Lost*. After poking a bit of fun at John Crowe Ransom for his summary disposal of this lyric as rather insignificant, Mr. Hecht went on to show that as a part of a final comment on the play as a whole it was loaded with overtones of meaning and extremely significant. On the surface it presented contrast between winter and spring. But taken as a comment on a comedy of manners in which Shakespeare is attacking hypocritical attitudes towards love and sex it sums up the differences between the loves of different social classes; the verses on spring representing the court attitude and the ones on winter the more earth-

ly and lowly approach. The cuckoo, a notoriously promiscuous bird, sings the song of the cuckold to the light loves of the courtiers, while the wise owl's song implies that in winter the best indoor sport is to wit, to woo.

Leighton Brewer  
Boston University

### Teaching the Novel

The session on "Teaching the Novel" consisted not of the usual short prepared speeches but of a panel discussion of the subject. Chairman Wisner Payne Kinne (Tufts) set the session going by asking Professor Gerald Brace (Boston University) and Dr. Norman Friedman (University of Connecticut) two questions: Why teach the novel? and What is fiction? Professor Brace, picking up an aspect of the second question, suggested that the novel is a form of art which tries to get everything in, whereas poetry and drama are always pushing things out. Discussion tended to center on *Great Expectations* and on *The Great Gatsby*.

Dr. Friedman suggested that *Gatsby* was not so thin as Professor Brace believed, and that although it has less background than *Great Expectations*, it has all the details necessary. *Great Expectations* needs details of Pip's home because Pip ultimately returns to the forge; *Gatsby*, without a home to turn to, dies stripped of values, and therefore the novel requires less of his background.

Underlying most of the ranging discussion was Professor Brace's view that form is relatively unimportant (*Bleak House* is great, yet is formally "a mess") and Dr. Friedman's view that formal criticism is probably the soundest approach to teaching the novel. Questions from the floor centered on the nature of formal criticism and its relevance to Dickens. When a questioner asked if students were not prejudiced against Dickens, Professor Kinne concluded the meeting by suggesting that unfortunately students were so unfamiliar with the history of the novel as to come to it without significant or persistent prejudice.

Sylvan Barnet  
Tufts College

Regional CEA groups throughout the country are urged to send summary reports of meetings and the texts of unusually good papers to the Executive Editor of *The Critic* for publication up to the limit of the available space.



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